



Victim Impact Statement

On April 12th, 2022, Ryker Charles Smith made us the proudest and happiest parents. He was and is the most beautiful and perfect baby boy. He was our first child and the first male on my side of the family in over 50 years. It was a magical day and I never wanted it to end. The 3 months and 15 days that we had with Ryker were filled with so much love, laughter, and pure joy.

On July 27th, 2022, our world was flipped upside down. Being told that your healthy baby boy was gone brought me to my knees pleading to God. Losing a child is an indescribable pain that cuts deep into the very core of one's being. It is a pain that no parent should ever have to endure, as it shatters dreams, hopes, and the future that was once envisioned. It is a pain that lingers, haunting every waking moment and infiltrating even the deepest recesses of sleep. It is a pain that leaves a void, an emptiness that cannot be filled, and a heaviness that weighs down the soul. It is a pain that forever alters the trajectory of life, leaving parents forever changed, forever marked by the absence of their beloved child. It is a pain that words fail to capture, for it is a pain that can only be truly understood by those who have experienced it.

The void left in our hearts is indescribable, and the loss we have endured is immeasurable. As I reflect on this everlasting nightmare, I cannot help but wonder if there were signs, if there were questions left unanswered. It is my sincere hope that my experience serves as a wake-up call to all parents and guardians, urging them to ask the right questions before entrusting their child's care to a daycare facility or an individual. And, most importantly, know what questions to ask. We must be diligent in our research, thorough in our inquiries, and unwavering in our commitment to our child's safety and well-being. Let us learn from Ryker's Requests and strive to prevent such heartbreak from befalling any other family.

The Smiths 🦋